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What The Frack?

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Hydraulic fracturing needs to be slowed until further research can be done to prevent the horrific side effects that result from this process. The process of hydraulic fracturing, or "fracking" is the when a deep well is drilled and toxic fluid is injected at a high enough pressure to fracture the earth's crust and release natural gas or oil. Natural gas has been said to pollute water to the extent that it will light on fire. Over the past decade there has been protests against "fracking," but it continues to grow. According to Climate Central, there are more than 1.1 million active oil and gas wells across 36 states. These wells are resulting in contaminated water supplies, air and stream pollution, and devastated landscapes. "Fracking" needs to be slowed, until we can figure out in full the effects and potential consequences. According to the Natural Resource Defense Council, "Fracking is a suspect in polluted drinking water in Arkansas, Colorado, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia and Wyoming, where residents have reported changes in water quality or quantity following fracturing operations." Having contaminated water in America is unheard of, and "fracking" is taking this right away from citizens. Hydraulic fracturing is expanding across America, and a new well may be drilled near you. Toxic chemicals are used in the process of "fracking," mixed with sand and water, and you could be exposed to them. There are hundreds of chemicals used in the process, and can harm you through water contamination, direct skin contact, or breathing in the vapors.

There have been many cases of health issues blamed on “fracking” all over the country. These health issues have ranged anywhere from skin and eye irritation to respiratory and liver damage. “Fracking” has many negative side effects, but it is a profitable organization. Millions of dollars are generated from companies that produce this energy, and it does create thousands of jobs. However, hydraulic fracturing is something that is seen as a moneymaker, but is not being balanced properly with what it is doing to the environment. People believe natural gas should replace oil and coal, because it is an energy source that is a lot cleaner. However, natural gas emits methane, which is much harsher on the atmosphere than carbon is. The Environmental Defense Fund states that methane is 84 times more potent than carbon dioxide. Methane is the major pollutant as a result of hydraulic fracturing, and can be leaked in various ways. Climate Central continues by saying “Methane leaks come from defects in the cement and steel linings of oil and gas well bores that protrude into the earth sometimes thousands of feet. Both groundwater contamination and methane leakage into the atmosphere are the result, according to the study.” This methane leakage is contributing to global climate change more and more each day as more and more wells are built. “Fracking” has multiple side effects on the planet, and we have drilled thousands of wells with out fully thinking of the repercussions that could result from them. Hydraulic fracturing has been known to be causing earthquakes in places that do not necessarily experience them regularly. According to USGS, the eastern and central United States has been experiencing about 100 earthquakes per year, over the past few years. Before this, the average was about 20 earthquakes per year. This rise in earthquakes is a result from fracturing the earth’s crust in order to receive natural gas. The process of hydraulic fracturing has obvious reasons

for why we need to put more regulations on it. The thing is that regulations are there, but they are not enforced well enough to stop companies from disobeying them. Further research needs to be done to understand how we can obtain this natural gas in a safe, efficient way, before we start drilling aimlessly. You would not want a new well being drilled in your back yard, so why should people have to put up with this. “Fracking” is doing nothing but producing energy as a result of harming our water supply, and devastating our environment. Hydraulic fracturing needs to be slowed, until further investigation and research can be done to prevent these terrible side effects from occurring.

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